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POLICY REVIEW

ENSURING CHILD SURVIVAL, PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

SUMMARY

The situation of children and women in Africa has remained largely unchanged in the last year and in some cases, it may have deteriorated. In 1992, UNICEF increased programme delivery to Africa by 30 per cent, although this was mostly for emergency programmes that have expanded considerably. This was largely due to the situation in the Horn of Africa, but was also a result of the renewed civil strife in Liberia and the drought in southern Africa. It is proposed that UNICEF capacity and presence in Africa be strengthened in the 1994-1995 Administrative Budget. Revised strategies will strengthen programme sustainability through capacity-building and empowerment, especially of women.

The International Conference on Assistance to African Children (ICAAC), organized by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) intensified the commitment of African countries to the human development goals for the 1990s. UNICEF supported ICAAC through the preparation, with OAU, of publications as well as through advocacy with Governments and NGOs in and outside Africa. The "Consensus of Dakar" adopted by the Conference presents a solid resolution by the African countries to restructure budgets in favour of children, as well as some important, if qualified, commitments by donor countries. The Conference benefited from the availability of 42 National Programmes of Action (NPAs) in final or draft form. These NPAs have incorporated programmes for children into the national planning process. Besides being a reference for the restructuring of national budgets, the NPAs will be used to discuss with bilateral and multilateral donors the possibilities for funding children's support programmes. Support for implementation of the NPAs will also be facilitated by closer coordination between UNICEF and OAU, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank.

The need for a fresh start for Africa in the 1990s remains and it must not be more of the same but rather something different. The wave of political transition sweeping across Africa presents opportunities as well as challenges and it is proposed that future UNICEF programme strategies in Africa focus more support for implementing NPAs, with particular emphasis on direct contacts with and support to community and peoples' organizations, while maintaining total transparency with the Government. This approach is expected to yield dividends in terms of greater sustainability of programmes, more capacity-building and empowerment of beneficiaries.

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INTRODUCTION

1. The present report was prepared in response to decision 1992/21 (E/ICEF/1992/14), in which the Executive Board requested a report on progress made in implementing the UNICEF commitment to Africa as the region of highest priority at present and on activities undertaken to respond to emergencies in Africa. The Board also requested that UNICEF support the International Conference on Assistance to African Children (ICAAC), organized by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Dakar, Senegal, from 25 to 27 November 1992, facilitate long-term funding for national programmes of action (NPAs) in Africa and report on future activities to be undertaken by UNICEF to ensure child survival, protection and development in Africa.

2. Regrettably, the poor indicators of the situation of children and women in sub-Saharan Africa described in the 1992 report to the Executive Board on the operationalization of UNICEF priority to Africa (E/ICEF/1992/L.4) have not changed significantly. These indicators, which reflect the reality facing children and women in Africa, are moving far more slowly than UNICEF would wish and than many children and women in Africa can bear. Short-term prospects are also grim. For the first time in 30 years, there are signs that infant mortality rates in some countries (Uganda and Zambia) are actually increasing, rather than merely declining more slowly than needed to achieve the human development goals. One common factor shared by those two countries - a high rate of prevalence of human immunodeficiency virus, which causes the acquired immune deficiency syndrome - is, unfortunately, not limited to those countries alone. If this is the beginning of a new and deadly trend in Africa, then the commitment expressed by the Board in decision 1991/13 (E/ICEF/1991/15) to make Africa the region of highest priority is even more appropriate now.

3. On the more positive side, the medium- to long-term prospects for children and women in Africa are, by contrast, quite good. The gradual, but widespread and definite, move to greater popular participation in Government in Africa bodes well for issues of human development such as health, education and access to clean water. The political transition now taking place in Africa is an affirmation that the continent intends to take its destiny in own hands by making difficult decisions for sustainable human development, including improving economic management through structural adjustment, improving governance through the acceptance of more open democratic processes and improving living conditions through the restructuring of national budgets in favour of human development. However, there is as yet no evidence that more open democratic systems in Africa alone will be able to reverse years of economic mismanagement. Economic growth will depend on a number of global factors as well. The high expectations in many countries about what the new administrations may be able to achieve could lead to further instability as rapid economic improvements do not materialize. Even so, peace, political stability and the advent of democratic governance create the conditions for a decline in military expenditures and provide opportunities for restructuring social sector spending and for encouraging community participation in the extension of social services to a broader range of the population. In many countries, this political change is accompanied by a reorganization of government structures in favour of decentralization. These new decentralized

forms of organization represent both a challenge and an opportunity for UNICEF advocacy and action at the subnational level.

I. REALIZING THE UNICEF PRIORITY FOR AFRICA

4. Measured in financial terms, total UNICEF programme delivery in 1992 increased by 35 per cent from $210 million in 1991 to an estimated $284 million in 1992 in West and Central Africa and Eastern and Southern Africa (which together constitute sub-Saharan Africa, but are referred to as Africa in the present report). This increase of $74 million comprised an increase of $11 million in general resources and $63 million in supplementary funds. Excluding expenditure on emergency programmes, expenditure on regular programmes in Africa increased from $175 million in 1991 to an estimated $200 million in 1992. The greater share - 52 per cent - of supplementary-funded expenditure in 1992 was for emergency activities.

5. Contributions to UNICEF supplementary-funded programmes in Africa increased from $97.2 million in 1991 to an estimated $160.9 million in 1992. However, while supplementary-funding contributions to emergency programmes in Africa have risen by $72.7 million (from $40.9 million in 1991 to $113.6 million in 1992), supplementary-funding contributions to regular programmes have decreased by some $9 million (from $56.3 million in 1991 to $47.3 million in 1992), and only 31 per cent of all approved programmes for supplementary-funding for Africa in 1992 were funded. Given that over 57 per cent of the 1992 contributions to emergency programmes were for activities in just three countries in the Horn of Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia), the lack of supplementary funding for longer-term child development efforts in other parts of Africa is a cause of increasing concern to UNICEF. To sustain the regular programmes which depend on supplementary funding in countries not affected by emergencies, UNICEF allocated an estimated $30.4 million from general resources in 1992 to unfunded or under-funded supplementary-funded programmes in Africa.

6. In 1992, UNICEF initiated several actions to strengthen its presence and capacity in Africa. In the administrative and programme support budget for the biennium 1994-1995 (E/ICEF/1993/AB/L.1 and Corr.1 and Corr.2), country offices are proposed from 1994 for Eritrea, should its independence be approved and recognized by the United Nations, and South Africa, subject to the approval of the United Nations. In addition, it is proposed that a liaison office be established in Gabon and that the existing sub-office in Guinea-Bissau be upgraded to a country office. If these proposals are approved by the Executive Board and implemented, UNICEF will have a full-time presence in 45 countries in Africa, up from 42 in the 1992-1993 biennium. At the same time, it is proposed that the number of staff posts (both core and project) in Africa increase from 2,070 in the 1992-1993 biennium to 2,268 in the 1994-1995 biennium, which would include 207 national Professional officers out of the 507 Professional staff in Africa. These increases in the number of staff are accompanied by an increase in programme delivery throughput per post in Africa of 3.7 per cent in 1992 over 1990.

7. In recent years, UNICEF has paid increasing attention to sustainability and capacity-building in country programmes in Africa. UNICEF provided support for national planning capacity in the development of NPAs in many countries, while

programmes promoting the development of health systems using the Bamako Initiative strategy emphasized support to subnational and community-level organizational structures. In developing or reviewing country programmes with Governments, UNICEF has emphasized the support that existing or reformulated programmes can give to decentralization and community empowerment (particularly of women), both of which are key strategies supported by UNICEF. Decentralization and popular participation can provide a mechanism for closer collaboration between the Government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the community in the alleviation of poverty and the delivery of social services. For UNICEF, decentralization is not seen as a strategy with the disguised aim of shifting the burden of development to the poor, but rather as a policy aimed at improving local democracy, efficiency, equity and effectiveness in the delivery of social services. The policy encompasses not only the transfer of resources to the local level, but also the strengthening of community-level management and technical capacity, lessening of dependence on the central level and closer collaboration with NGOs and community organizations. However, UNICEF is still acquiring experience and capability in this area and must do more theoretical and operational work to refine these approaches, for example, by using the framework of the Bamako Initiative strategy. Increasingly, family and community empowerment are being recognized as the critical factors essential to the long-term sustained impact of programmes. The current political transition process in many countries in Africa has created the conditions under which programmes aiming to strengthen empowerment can function, and UNICEF plans to seize this opportunity. There is also greater emphasis on community-centred programmes, such as those being implemented in the area-based programmes in the United Republic of Tanzania or through the Local Government Areas in Nigeria, as useful approaches to develop rapidly and systematically working methodologies that Governments or communities can adapt to their own situations. In Africa, UNICEF has provided support for community-centred programmes, while maintaining the emphasis on universal coverage for immunization and the achievement of targets set out in specific NPAs.

8. Since 1990, African countries have been working to fulfil the commitments made in the Declaration of the World Summit for Children, which called on all countries to prepare NPAs. In many countries, a participatory approach was used and national task forces, including NGOs, United Nations agencies and community representatives, were established under the leadership of the Government to review national targets and prepare NPAs. In some countries, such as Cameroon, the preparation of the NPA became an exclusively national task, with limited input from UNICEF or other donors. By the time of ICAAC in November 1992, no less than 42 final or draft NPAs (including 37 in sub-Saharan Africa) were ready, despite the limited planning capacity available to most Governments, and this has now increased to 44 (including 38 in sub-Saharan Africa). Through NPAs, African Governments have managed to bring children onto their national development agendas. The strength of purpose with which the NPAs were prepared is an indication of the commitment of African Governments to the future of their children.

II. SUPPORT FOR EMERGENCY ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA

9. Because a full review of UNICEF emergency programmes in 1992 is provided in the report on UNICEF emergency operations (E/ICEF/1993/11), the present report will review only the key issues concerning emergencies in Africa. UNICEF emergency assistance in Africa increased significantly in 1992 in response to the sharp deterioration in the situation of children and women in Angola, Kenya, Liberia, Somalia and in southern Africa, while problems continued in the Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Guinea, Malawi and Rwanda. At the same time, the nature of the UNICEF response had to change to adapt to the nature of complex emergencies, especially in Angola, Liberia and Somalia. In several of these countries in 1992, UNICEF and United Nations staff and supplies themselves became the focus of attacks and looting by forces involved in civil strife. The fluidity of the security situation in any emergency, combined with the urgent need to ensure that supplies are delivered, creates conditions in which staff are exposed to risks and several lost their lives in 1992. Management support to emergency activities at headquarters and the regional offices has been more clearly defined and special emphasis is now being placed on ensuring the security of staff in dangerous situations. The training of field staff in emergency operations in Africa has been increased, and better communication equipment made available. Coordination with the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) has been strengthened through joint activities in preparing emergency appeals, in fund-raising (including the first two allocations from the new Central Emergency Revolving Fund, which were made to Africa through UNICEF) and in monitoring the outcome of emergency responses. Increasingly, emergencies and the response to them are seen as affecting more than one country, which requires strengthened mechanisms for regional inter-agency coordination.

10. The Horn of Africa was the focus of major assistance to the continent in 1992 because of the combined effects of war, drought and political instability in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, which caused massive population movements both internally and across borders in the subregion, which also includes Djibouti and the Sudan. The Special Emergency Programme for the Horn of Africa, coordinated by DHA, appealed for $60 million for UNICEF activities in these countries in early 1992 and a revised appeal was issued in July 1992.

11. In Somalia, since the re-establishment of the UNICEF presence in the country in December 1991, the UNICEF programme has continued to address the urgent needs of children and women within the limits of security and access. Many activities were limited by the lack of secure airports, ports and warehouses in central and southern Somalia, and by threats to staff and supplies. Two UNICEF staff members were killed in Somalia in 1992 and, in some instances, the United Nations flag has become a target. In addition to its own activities, UNICEF provided health and supplementary feeding supplies to several NGOs operating in Somalia. UNICEF also attempted to raise international awareness of the situation in Somalia to facilitate the peace process and the fund-raising needed for rehabilitation. Several inter-agency plans of action were developed with DHA and other United Nations agencies, the most recent being the 100-day plan launched in October 1992 that appealed for $37.9 million, of which $27.4 million have been obtained, to accelerate child immunization and supplementary feeding. UNICEF deployed staff from other duty stations, including Indonesia, Namibia and Nigeria, to implement activities in Somalia.

By November, 60 per cent of accessible children under seven years of age had been vaccinated, and 55 per cent of children at 10 feeding centres were reported to have gained considerable weight over the previous month. Additional achievements were made in the areas of water supply and sanitation and household food security.

12. The current drought emergency in southern Africa is affecting the 10 countries of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) (Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe) as well as Madagascar. In April 1992, UNICEF programmes in the 10 SADCC countries received an allocation of $150,000 each from the Emergency Programme Fund for immediate action to respond to the drought. In May 1992, a consolidated United Nations/SADCC appeal for the Drought Emergency in Southern Africa (DESA) was launched, with requirements totalling $856 million. The UNICEF portion of the appeal was $51.8 million, of which an estimated $21.4 million had been received by December 1992. The drought has affected over 18 million people, two thirds of whom are women and children. The response to the DESA appeal has been varied, perhaps as a direct result of the fact that some of the countries included in the appeal, such as Angola and Mozambique, were already experiencing complex emergencies caused by internal conflicts. While the response for Angola has been 1 per cent of the required amount, Mozambique has received 69 per cent of the funds requested. In the cases of Malawi and Zimbabwe, the situation of the Mozambican refugees has further exacerbated the difficulties of the populations in the host countries. Despite good rainfall reports at the end of 1992, it will take several years of good rainfall to restore the water table to adequate levels so that drinking water supplies throughout the subregion will return to normal.

13. Liberia is another case in which several countries in a subregion have been adversely affected by events in a neighbouring country. The resumption of heavy fighting in late 1992 around Monrovia and Gbarnga sparked another major exodus, with many Liberians displaced from outlying areas and pushed towards Monrovia or across the borders into Sierra Leone, Guinea and the Côte d'Ivoire. At the same time, civil strife in Sierra Leone forced many Sierra Leoneans to become refugees inside Liberia. The UNICEF response to the surge in numbers of displaced children and women in Monrovia included supplying hospitals and health clinics with essential drugs and support for transporting water. UNICEF also assisted in evacuating orphans away from military camps. UNICEF activities in the surrounding countries have been hampered by the lack of donor funding for the subregional appeal for Liberian refugees, although assistance has been provided in Guinea for water supply and sanitation activities and in the Côte d'Ivoire for health and sanitation in the refugee settlement areas.

III. SUPPORT FOR THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ASSISTANCE TO AFRICAN CHILDREN

14. ICACC, convened by OAU in Dakar, Senegal, in November 1992, was the most important event of the year for children in Africa. At the request of OAU, through a resolution passed at its 1991 Summit of Heads of State and Government, and with the support of the Executive Board in decision 1992/21 (E/ICEF/1992/14), which requested UNICEF to continue to support OAU as

appropriate for the success of the Conference, UNICEF worked with OAU to ensure the accomplishment of the objectives of the Conference. ICAAC, a direct follow-up to the World Summit for Children, was different from follow-up meetings held in other regions in that it included non-regional donor countries and was focused on defining not only internal but also external opportunities for assistance to NPAs. ICAAC was a landmark meeting, attended by representatives of 46 African countries and 26 donor countries, 70 African and international NGOs and 11 United Nations agencies. In many ways, it was a unique opportunity for African Governments and NGOs to put their own efforts on behalf of children and women in Africa onto the international agenda, and to refocus the development dialogue between Africa and its development partners on children and women.

15. In the "Consensus of Dakar" adopted by the Conference (see document A/C.2/47/13), African countries committed themselves to link their NPAs with their national development planning and financing structures, as well as to continue the NPA process at subnational levels, reinforcing the Conference's theme, "Africa's Children: Africa's Future". In particular, participants committed themselves to support the achievement of the following key intermediate goals by the end of 1995:

(a) To raise Africa's immunization coverage levels for diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, poliomyelitis and tuberculosis from the 75 per cent achieved for the universal child immunization effort to 80 per cent;

(b) To ensure 90 per cent of coverage against measles, by far the most lethal of the vaccine-preventable diseases, and of tetanus toxoid for women of child-bearing age;

(c) To achieve 80 per cent usage of oral rehydration therapy in order to prevent dehydration caused by diarrhoea;

(d) The virtual elimination of iodine deficiency disorders;

(e) The virtual elimination of vitamin A deficiency and its consequences;

(f) To encourage exclusive breast-feeding for four to six months and to sustain breast-feeding for up to two years of age and beyond, with complementary foods beginning at four to six months of age.

16. In committing themselves to achieving these intermediate human goals as early as 1995, African Governments signalled to the international community their commitment to the survival, protection and development of children. At ICAAC, African countries clearly demonstrated the measures they were taking through restructuring of budgetary resources to address the priority concerns of children and women in their countries, based upon the NPAs.

17. The need for corresponding commitments by the international community is self-evident and reinforces the call by the Executive Board in decision E/ICEF/1992/21 (E/ICEF/1992/14) for the donor community to increase further its development cooperation in Africa in order to assist in the achievement of the goals. At ICAAC, donors gave a positive, if qualified, response, accepting to commit themselves to increasing and sustaining the share of official development

assistance (ODA) for social priority sectors by 1995 in line with increasing commitments by African countries, bearing in mind the level of 20 per cent of total ODA for these sectors recommended in the United Nations Development Programme Human Development Report 1992. In addition, the Consensus of Dakar also places special emphasis on external assistance to programmes for children and women in Africa, taking into account NPAs, debt relief and debt swaps for development as important means for donor countries to provide assistance to African countries.

18. The particular emphasis of the UNICEF contribution to ICAAC was the joint preparation with the OAU secretariat of a comprehensive document on the needs and the possibilities for action in Africa to ensure the survival, protection and development of children, "Africa's Children, Africa's Future: Human Investment Priorities for the 1990s". Another joint OAU/UNICEF document, "Africa's Children, Africa's Future: Background Sectoral Papers" included reviews of priority strategies and actions for achieving the specific sectoral human goals and targets for children and women in Africa, with estimates of the magnitude of the costs involved. Many of the sectoral reviews were undertaken in consultation with other concerned United Nations agencies. In addition, UNICEF prepared "Profiles of National Programmes of Action: Initiatives for Africa's Children", a summary of NPAs from 42 African countries, which was widely distributed and referred to at the Conference. For many of Africa's partners in development, the sheer scale of the need for assistance to achieve the human development goals of children and women was daunting. In order to present the issues in a more practical context for potential donors, UNICEF developed a document "Investing in Africa's Children: Illustrative Programme Approaches", which demonstrated the extent and the kinds of external assistance that could best complement the significant commitments being proposed by the African countries themselves. In close collaboration with OAU, UNICEF advocated participation by Governments and NGOs in and beyond Africa to participate in the Conference.

19. The Heads of State of the Group for South-South Consultation and Cooperation (the "Group of 15") met in Dakar shortly before ICAAC and sent a message of support to the Conference. OAU, with UNICEF support, involved the African and international media in the Conference. UNICEF also supported media visits to several African countries prior to the Conference. Representatives of African and international NGOs were given the opportunity to participate in the Conference. OAU and UNICEF worked with the African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect and Environment and Development of the Third World to organize an NGO symposium in preparation for the Conference. As part of the global initiative "Mayors as Defenders of Children", 40 mayors from Canada, Italy, Nigeria and Senegal gathered in Dakar to establish ways to translate NPAs to the municipal level in order to achieve the goals in their own municipalities.

20. The follow-up to the Consensus of Dakar will be coordinated at the country level by national machineries incorporating all segments of society, focusing on ensuring adequate planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of actions to achieve the NPA objectives. A major challenge will lie in transforming the political commitment into practical policy directives and concrete programmes. Social mobilization will be required to build links between the policy makers and service providers on the one hand, and the communities and families on the

other, using new opportunities in the media and mass communication in Africa. Hopefully, UNICEF support to the follow-up to ICAAC will become part of the wider response of the United Nations system in each country, in addition to being integrated into UNICEF country programme activities, emphasizing the continued support for the NPA process and linking the human goals with the macroeconomic and fiscal measures of each Government. At the continental level, advocacy and mobilization in support of the Consensus of Dakar will continue under the auspices of OAU and in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank (AfDB). Indigenous NGOs in Africa will play an important role in the implementation of the Consensus of Dakar, and UNICEF intends to strengthen its ties with African research institutions and other networks of relevant voluntary organizations so as to draw upon indigenous human resources and gain broader participation in the quest to reach the human development goals in Africa. As a first step, UNICEF regional offices in Africa are planning to undertake a comprehensive review of such institutions and organizations related to the mandate of UNICEF and to assess areas where cooperation can be rapidly accelerated.

IV. MOBILIZATION OF RESOURCES FOR NATIONAL PROGRAMMES OF ACTION IN AFRICA

21. In Africa, the NPA process is becoming an important planning tool, identifying the problems facing children and women and the programme strategies to be followed to reach the human development goals. As requested by the 1992 Executive Board, UNICEF country offices provided technical assistance (through field office, regional or headquarters staff or through national and international consultants) in the elaboration of the costing of the NPAs and of potential long-term financing arrangements to over one half of the 25 countries in Africa that have incorporated these aspects in their NPAs. A workshop to allow government officials directly charged with NPAs to exchange experience on the development and implementation of NPAs was organized for 12 African countries, and other similar consultations are being planned.

22. It is estimated in "Africa's Children, Africa's Future" that the achievement of the human goals for the 1990s will require some $8.8 billion each year from 1993 to the year 2000, with an additional $3.9 billion per year, based on current estimates, required for post-war and post-disaster rehabilitation. Of the $8.8 billion per year, about one half could be found within national or community budgets and the balance will be sought from external assistance, based on assumptions consistent with those used for the World Summit for Children. The high level of African participation at ICAAC (where 28 delegations from OAU member States included ministers) was an indication of the commitment of African Governments to mobilizing resources for implementation of NPAs. The participation of several finance and planning ministers was a welcome sign that the economic dimensions of the implementation of the NPAs was recognized.

23. In the Consensus of Dakar, participating Governments endorsed the importance of linking the financing of NPAs with existing development finance mechanisms. This approach would aim to enhance existing forms of bilateral and multilateral cooperation (such as the World Bank Consultative Group and the round-table mechanisms) by increasing the focus on NPAs and on concerns of children and women within the wider context of international cooperation for

development. In several countries, UNICEF has facilitated in discussions between the Government and its development partners about the possibilities for financing the NPA.

24. The Consensus of Dakar refers to the concept of national compacts for children, details of which are elaborated in "Africa's Children, Africa's Future: Human Investment Priorities in the 1990s". Given the current instability in the African political and economic framework, such a commitment from external partners, within the context of a joint moral and political commitment to African children, would provide the sustained capability needed to bring the NPAs to reality before the twenty-first century. A first critical step towards such national compacts could be made through support for accelerated resource mobilization activities for Africa, to ensure that national efforts to achieve the intermediate goals in Africa are funded.

25. Special emphasis has been placed on providing technical advice on debt swaps for development as one way of reducing the debt burden of African countries, while simultaneously releasing much needed funding for social development or child survival programmes. Such operations already have been established in Madagascar and the Sudan with support from the National Committees of Canada, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, and by a number of private banks in Europe and North America. UNICEF is pursuing the possibility of similar operations in up to 10 other countries in Africa. The Consensus of Dakar notes the commitment of donors and the international financial institutions to formulate debt relief and conversion schemes in ways that make possible increased budget allocations and renewed economic growth, with at least part of the benefits being used to advance programmes for children. UNICEF is reviewing methods to raise the proportion of total development assistance allocated to the social sectors in Africa. These could include, for example, closer collaboration of UNICEF with the international financial institutions in the development of assistance packages for the social sector, which would combine UNICEF assistance through the country programme with loans from the lending institutions to address the NPA goals of a particular country.

26. As a first step in the follow-up to ICAAC, UNICEF and AfDB recently signed a memorandum of understanding that committed both organizations to closer collaboration in the development of social sector programmes and projects in AfDB member countries. UNICEF is already working closely with the World Bank in Africa on the development of health systems, nutrition and household food security and in basic education, and in 1992 expanded that collaboration to include urban sector development as well. Future collaboration will emphasize the implementation of NPAs. Another funding strategy is for UNICEF to act as a channel for donors; already, the Government of Norway has given $1.4 million through UNICEF specifically for the initial NPA implementation activities of five African countries.

27. At the national level, the search for additional resources to implement NPAs is complicated by the continuing economic crisis affecting most African countries. While several Governments in Africa have expressed the desire to allocate additional resources to programmes for children and women through restructuring national budgets, in many cases this cannot be done as all sectors and departments currently do not have adequate resources. Already, the tax base

of the central Governments in many African countries has been eroded because of depressed export prices, pressures on Governments to repay debts imprudently incurred and used, and the movement of much local investment and economic activity to the untaxed informal sector. This erosion of central Governments' fiscal bases has been compounded by the retreat of international investors pending the arrival of the stability of new regimes, and the reduction of commitments by international donors on the grounds of the lack of good governance. Structural adjustment programmes, aimed at promoting new economic growth, so far have succeeded only in constraining expenditure, particularly that of central Governments.

28. Until economic and political stability return, it will not be possible to expect central Governments to provide all the services and resources required to address the needs of children and women in Africa. In most cases, the immediate hope is that the end of tensions generated by the cold war or the removal of military regimes would bring about a domestic "peace dividend", which could free some additional government resources for social sectors. Such restructuring is difficult and slow. Nevertheless, there are four clear examples: Benin, Namibia, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe (in the early 1980s). However, it would be unwise to rely entirely on political changes to ensure future improvements in the situation of children and women in Africa, as it could very well turn out that some countries may yet move away from p litical change and revert back to the former status quo.

V. FUTURE ACTIVITIES AND STRATEGIES

29. The challenge for Africa to do more for its children and women remains undiminished, in spite of greater understanding that the continent's human, financial and technical capacities are limited by debt, underdevelopment, constraints on world commodity trade, political instability, civil strife, drought, policy failures and administrative weaknesses. Africans and their development partners alike know this. The temptation to succumb to the many pessimistic scenarios outlining the future of Africa in dramatic terms is great, but the needs of Africa's children remain; they are as real as death, as burning as malnutrition, as yawning as ignorance. To disregard these needs would be easy, but short-sighted. These children exist, they will grow up, they will prepare for their future as best they can. And if the world is not ready to give some hope and meaning to their lives, these children will fashion that hope and give some meaning to their own existence in any way they can. These children will grow up to be poorly educated, in poor health and in poverty. They will live close to the edge of survival and, thus, will have a short-term view of themselves and the world around them.

30. The emergence of new forms of social and community organizations in Africa, based on collective self-reliance, bode well for the future of sustained social development. The evolving role of UNICEF is to be able to address these emerging community and peoples' organizations in a meaningful way, without discounting or dampening the capacity, responsibility and interest of central Governments to address the needs of children and women in their countries. While UNICEF has developed reactive processes to address the need to modify country programme strategies when the national development environment changes (known as "adaptive programming"), there is also a need to have a pro-active

approach to the actual and potential social transformations in Africa based on a recognition of the dynamics of change taking place. As a result of the popular demand for change, there is a rapid expansion of the participation of people in their own development, creating a process of empowerment from below, to which UNICEF must respond.

31. NPAs will be a key focus for UNICEF advocacy and action, especially in the development of subnational and local programmes of action for child survival, protection and development. UNICEF will play a strong role, in collaboration with other United Nations agencies, in supporting such subnational planning and programming processes to translate popular expression into structured activities focusing on human development and using the political space created by the transition process already under way. Capacity-building activities are expected to have a catalytic effect on community actions for children and women, by placing the human development goals at the centre of all development and political processes at all levels of society.

32. In the light of this perspective, and taking into account the needs of African children and women in the context of the longer-term needs of Africa, UNICEF programme policies and priorities will be:

(a) To continue to support Africa as the region of highest priority, with its share of UNICEF resources remaining at least at the current level until the year 2000;

(b) To advocate strongly on behalf of African children and African needs in political, economic and social forums, emphasizing the number of least developed countries in Africa;

(c) To provide programme support for the implementation of NPAs in Africa;

(d) To utilize and advocate a development approach that emphasizes capacity-building for sustainable development;

(e) To provide specific support for the achievement of the intermediate goals in Africa;

(f) To promote debt relief for children and increased social investment;

(g) To contribute strongly, with other United Nations agencies, to the development of the United Nations common country strategy in African countries, incorporating the goals of NPAs.

33. To respond to the opportunities for greater popular participation in development in Africa that are emerging as a result of the political transition process, UNICEF plans to change the way that it prepares and implements its country programmes. It will place more significance on direct contacts with and inputs from new partners such as subregional and regional institutions and community and peoples' organizations in the preparation of the situation analysis, the development of the programme strategy and plan of operations and the implementation of the programme. UNICEF would also consider direct support to community organization and institutional development within the country programme as a contribution towards capacity-building. More emphasis will also

be placed on UNICEF being a constructive partner of Governments and human rights groups in advocating the rights of African children. UNICEF would establish relations with new partners, especially at the subnational level, in programme planning, implementation and evaluation. However, when direct support is given to new partners, it is imperative that transparency be maintained with the Government in order to maintain complementarity of programmes at the central and peripheral levels. This new form of UNICEF cooperation will require additional human and financial resources if the emphasis on fostering community development is to be complemented by support to the central Government. However, it is an investment that has been shown to pay dividends in terms of sustaining or developing community coping mechanisms in advance of natural or man-made disasters, thus saving resources that would have been used for relief or rehabilitation. For example, the identification and reinforcement of "self-help" strategies for child survival, protection and development deriving from families and communities, such as the "NAAM" movement in Burkina Faso or the tons of Mali, are likely to be more cost-effective and sustainable than relief assistance provided after disaster has struck.

VI. CONCLUSION

34. The ultimate responsibility for changing the future prospects of Africa rests with Africans themselves. They declared their commitment to meeting this challenge with respect to children at ICAAC. Urgent action is needed to mobilize in creative ways the additional resources - about one half of $8.8 billion per year - needed to fund NPAs in Africa. UNICEF plans to extend its efforts in Africa by linking its work with Governments to its growing support for emerging community organizations. To extend UNICEF support in Africa, every possible technique - technological, managerial and sociological - will be used to make better use of existing funds. The future of Africa lies with its children, growing strong, healthy, free and capable of organizing their lives for a productive, peaceful and purposeful life in the twenty-first century.